



## ***AOT in Action***

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

### **A Message from Director Sherry Henry:**

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Good afternoon,

On behalf of the Arizona Office of Tourism and the great state of Arizona, we would like to congratulate and welcome the new Superintendent of the Grand Canyon National Park, David Uberuaga.

The Grand Canyon is *the* jewel of our statewide treasures with more than four million visitors a year visiting this amazing Arizona landmark. We look forward to working with Superintendent Uberuaga and achieving many successes for the Grand Canyon as well as our state.

Have a great week,

Sherry Henry  
Director, Arizona Office of Tourism

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### **AOT News**

#### **Meet New York Media Representatives at the Annual Media Marketplace**

AOT invites Arizona tourism suppliers to join us at our annual media marketplace in New York City. The event will take place at Studio 450, Tuesday, November 15. Participation is open to Arizona tourism suppliers with preference given to CVBs, Chambers and DMOs. We are anticipating approximately 65 – 75 key media representatives to attend. Delegates will have a small table for display and press kit distribution. Registration is \$900 per delegate, and is limited to one representative per delegation. If interest exceeds a delegation of 25 partners, AOT will

implement a lottery to determine which partners will attend. For more information please contact Kara Woroniec at [kworoniec@azot.gov](mailto:kworoniec@azot.gov) or 602-364-3715.

### **AOT Hosts 2nd Annual Toronto Media Marketplace**

AOT invites Arizona tourism suppliers to join us at the 2nd annual Toronto Media Marketplace. The event will take place Wednesday, November 16 with approximately 40 key media representatives in attendance. Delegates will have a table for material display and press kit distribution. Registration is \$900 per delegate, with participation limited to one representative per delegation. All other expenses are extra. For more information please contact Kara Woroniec at [kworoniec@azot.gov](mailto:kworoniec@azot.gov) or 602-364-3715.

### **Advertisement Opportunities Available in AOT's Consumer Fulfillment Pieces**

#### *2012 Arizona Official State Visitor's Guide*

Madden Media is now accepting advertising reservations for the 2012 Official State Visitors Guide (OSVG) and Map. This is the main consumer fulfillment piece of the Arizona Office of Tourism. The 2011 OSVG successfully integrates with AOT's online marketing efforts, including [www.arizonaguide.com](http://www.arizonaguide.com). Travelers have responded well to the newer OSVG design and magazine-style features that were rolled out in the 2010 OSVG and Map. Of particular interest, potential visitors found advertising placements helpful and stated in focus group testing that they would use them to choose specific trip activities. The 2012 OSVG will continue to build upon this success!

For more information, please contact Madden Media's Phoenix office at 480-638-3770 or Tucson office at 520-322-0895.

#### *AOT Consumer E-newsletter & Banner Ads*

Additionally, there is also a chance to participate in AOT's consumer eNewsletters and banner advertising efforts on [www.arizonaguide.com](http://www.arizonaguide.com). AOT distributes a monthly eNewsletter to 350,000+ subscribers who have opted in to information regarding Arizona travel. Madden Media is also offering immediate opportunities for interested advertisers to sponsor AOT's consumer eNewsletters, which have been recently redesigned to ensure more attention and click-thrus for partners. Immediate online opportunities are available, as well as discounts when you combine print placements with the digital vehicles.

For more information, please contact Madden Media's Phoenix office at 480-638-3770 or Tucson office at 520-322-0895.

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## **Upcoming Events & Activities**

### **France Media Mission**

Date: September 12 – 16

Location: Paris, France

### **Montreal Media Mission**

Date: September 27– 28  
Location: Montreal, QB

### **Discover America Day - Canada**

Date: October 3  
Location: Toronto, ON

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## **Industry News**

### **GMA Viewers Vote for Top 10 Most Beautiful Places in America; Sedona Among Choices**

Good Morning America is doing a segment on the Top 10 Most Beautiful Places in America, and Sedona is one of the ten! Below is the link to give your vote. Feel free to pass it along to others: [http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/best\\_places\\_USA/](http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/best_places_USA/). The segment will air Wednesday, August 8, 2011.

### **Travel Industry Accounts For 11.4 Percent of New U.S. Jobs**

The travel industry accounted for 11.4 percent of the total number of U.S. jobs created so far this year, according to an analysis of the Labor Department's just-released jobs report for July.

According to David Huether, senior vice president of economics and research at the U.S. Travel Association, the economy added a modest 117,000 jobs last month, while the unemployment rate remained essentially unchanged at 9.1 percent. Employment gains were rather lackluster across most industries. Posting a slowdown from the 30,000 jobs created in June, the travel industry added 9,200 jobs in July. However, through the first seven months of 2011, travel industry employment has expanded by 106,000 to a level of 7.5 million workers, accounting for 11.4 percent of the total jobs created so far this year.

That shows that the travel industry is one of the most efficient job engines in the U.S. economy, creating twice as many jobs as the rest of the private sector for any given increase in output. And a healthy travel industry is poised to help the very people who are currently out of work, Huether said. That means the travel industry is a job creator.

"Increasing the amount of international travelers to the U.S. through an improved U.S. visa system will create jobs, Huether said. "Travelers from China, India and Brazil collectively spent close to \$15 billion in the U.S. in 2010, which supported 105,800 U.S. jobs. Barriers, like visa delays, that discourage travel to the U.S. must be removed so we can enjoy the economic impact of these travelers." (*Travel Pulse*, August 5)

### **HDC: Forecasts show growth amid uncertainty**

What's a data conference without a healthy dose of forecasting?

Fortunately for attendees of the third annual Hotel Data Conference, the prognosticators came out in full force Thursday afternoon during the closing general session titled, "We made it this far ... now what?"

*Mark Lomanno, chief strategy officer, STR*

The past two years have yielded positive performance results for the U.S. hotel industry, Lomanno said. But while demand and occupancy are on the rise, growth in average daily rate still remains sluggish.

There's a lot of "noise" putting downward pressure on pricing, he said—everything from street-corner warfare to political instability.

Such short-term pricing issues are somewhat understandable. More disturbing is the inability of hoteliers to push rates over the long term, Lomanno said.

"In the last 12 years, there's only been two years where ADR has been what the inflation growth would have suggested it need to be to keep up with the growth in costs," he said. "... That's two out of 12. That's not a great number."

What rate growth does exist is concentrated at the high end of the market, he said. Year-to-date through June 2011, ADR has increased 5.9% in the luxury segment while it has risen a statistically insignificant 0.4% in the economy segment.

*Kristi White, global director of revenue optimization, TravelClick*

White brought a more global perspective to the stage—albeit one that was decidedly dreary.

"At least one if not possibly two countries will be making a move to pull out of the European Union," she said. "... They're getting tired of taking care of another country's college students who took out too many credit cards and can't quite pay their bills."

Economic volatility abounds in the U.S. as well, White said, pointing to the fact that Americans cut spending for the first time in 20 months during June.

"There is a huge consumer confidence issue," she said.

On the positive side, GDS bookings—which White said is a strong forward-looking indicator—are up over both 2007 and 2008.

"Big business is still traveling. ... We have to respond to that from a rate perspective."

*Mark Woodworth, president, PKF Hospitality Research*

First, the positive side: Woodworth said corporate profit growth has been "great" and will continue to be "fairly attractive."

Profitability in general should exhibit continued increases next year, he added.

But there exist macroeconomic headwinds that represent significant obstacles to full-blown recovery. Among them: unemployment, lack of airline seat capacity, declining guest satisfaction, and sputtering growth in home prices.

*Scott Berman, U.S. leader, hospitality & leisure, PricewaterhouseCoopers*

Berman began his presentation by recapping his own tumultuous July travel schedule, in which he spent a total of 23 roomnights in 18 U.S. cities. The swing comprised numerous irritations, annoyances and outright assaults on the concept of guest satisfaction.

“There is such an opportunity for the hospitality industry to be a white knight, to build good will ... with a harried, distrustful and weakened traveling public,” he said.

But with the U.S. economy in an apparent standstill and an alarming percentage of hotel product suffering from obsolescence, Berman had his doubts.

“I fear, and I hope I’m wrong, but I fear that there’s some apathy within our own industry that needs to be addressed,” he said.

Much of the trouble is simply operational. As demand improves and more guests fill hotels, those same hotels are struggling to provide the necessary levels of customer service.

“The demand rebound ... is reversing consumer satisfaction,” Berman said. “... This is clearly in my mind impacting the bottom-line performance industry wide.” (*Hotel News.com, August 5*)

### **Destinations Around the World Ready To Embrace Sustainability As Market Driver**

The organizers of the Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism Conference (ESTC), an annual industry conference focusing on advancing sustainability goals for the tourism industry, have set a hefty goal: reinforcing the roles of tourism in building a sustainable future. With a myriad of challenges facing tourism including climate change threats, political and economic instabilities this is not an easy mission to accomplish.

The ESTC (<http://www.ecotourismconference.org/>) Co-Chairs Dr. Kelly Bricker and Richard Edwards, representing the board of directors of The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), are optimistic, and not just because the idyllic and cheerful environment that this year's host, Hilton Head Island, SC, promises.

We want to bring significant change to the global tourism industry, says Edwards, and we need buy-ins from all sectors of our industry, both bottom-up and top-down. Increasingly we are seeing destinations DMOs, CVBs, National Tourism Boards becoming engaged in sustainable tourism and investing in going beyond going green and taking tangible steps to strengthen their sustainability efforts. This is a very promising trend for the future of tourism.

With the aim of inspiring destination organizations to lead sustainable tourism development around the world, the ESTC educational sessions offer valuable insights and lessons on how to effectively engage stakeholders and stay ahead in the rapidly growing ecotourism and sustainable tourism sector, from the state of California's example of working with tourism businesses to identify greenwashing-free sustainable tourism opportunities, to the post-revolution Egypt's efforts to reinvest in civil society engagement in tourism as a means to stimulate economic activity.

We expect a significant increase in the number of destination representatives attending this year's ESTC, says Dr. Bricker. This is a welcome shift in our conference attendee demographics, one we believe will help strengthen the impact of the conference, as well as the networking and

partnership-building opportunities during the conference. These destination leaders will be a key force in driving change in global tourism, and reinforcing the critical roles that tourism plays in building a sustainable future.

In addition to a wide range of destinations across the United States, from South Carolina to California and Oregon to Oklahoma, this years ESTC features a diverse delegation of destination representatives from around the world: Belize, Botswana, Canada, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Egypt, Greece, India, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Nicaragua, South Africa.

Many have existing ecotourism and sustainable travel initiatives, some have found innovative ways to differentiate their brands from others, and all are ready to take advantage of an array of opportunities that sustainable tourism brings.

The ESTC 2011 program also includes a hands-on pre-conference workshop (Monday, Sept. 19) focusing on destination marketing and management. Titled Sustainable Tourism - Doing Good as a Market Driver, this invitation-only complimentary workshop features expert lectures on branding, product development and marketing campaigns, and interactive discussions and exercises to help participating destinations develop targeted action plans to improve their marketing edge.

This years ESTC is being hosted by Hilton Head Island, SC, Sept. 19-21 and will bring together over 500 professionals from across the industry. For more information on the ESTC 2011, and to register, see: [www.ecotourismconference.org](http://www.ecotourismconference.org). (*Travel Industry Wire*, August 8)

### **Top Travel Difficulties Reported in 2011**

With the year a little more than halfway through, travelers have already experienced a number of travel disruptions from government regulations to travel-industry strikes. Here are some of the top concerns travelers have faced in 2011:

#### *Natural Disasters*

Thousands of people traveled to Japan in the aftermath of the 8.9-magnitude earthquake and tsunami that struck the country's east coast in March of this year in order to help with cleanup and search and rescue efforts, but thousands more stayed away because of radiation and safety concerns. The latest figures from Japan's tourism industry indicate that while travelers are slowly returning to the country, numbers are still significantly lower than they were at this point in 2010.

Other natural disasters that have affected travelers' plans this year include a volcanic eruption in Iceland and unprecedented spring flooding in many areas of the United States.

#### *Transportation Strikes*

The transportation industry in Europe has been riddled with labor strikes that have caused some travelers to alter vacation plans and book trips a little closer to home: from spas in Los Angeles to New York hotels. Recent European strikes include taxi drivers in Greece, air traffic control in Germany, and train operators in France. Many travelers are finding it difficult to travel both to and from and within European countries. In some cases, tourists are being stranded by these service disruptions, as was the case for many passengers who had booked flights aboard British Airways in advance of their 22-day strike this year.

### *TSA Measures*

When the Transportation Security Administration implemented new security measures that included the use of full-body backscatter scanners and “enhanced” pat-downs last year, many air travelers were outraged. In 2011, the TSA’s continued use of these controversial security measures have caused more than a few embarrassing blunders for the government agency. These incidents have lead to some to label the TSA’s efforts “security theater.”

In response to public backlash, the TSA recently announced that it was testing a new security program at Boston’s Logan International Airport called Screening Passengers by Observation Techniques. In this new program, trained TSA agents will question travelers and judge their reactions to determine whether passenger might pose a security threat.

### *Fuel Costs*

As has been the case for the past several years, fuel costs for both cars and jets are extremely high, meaning that many people cannot afford to travel and causing others to look for ways to save money on cheap hotel rates or package deals. While passengers are looking for new ways to save, the airlines themselves are drumming up charges for services that had been free and phasing out many perks that passengers used to enjoy. (*Travel Industry Wire, August 8*)

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### **Calendar of Events**

Visit [www.ArizonaGuide.com](http://www.ArizonaGuide.com) to find information on all the exciting [events, festivals and activities](#) held throughout the Grand Canyon State!

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